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Tamara

My name is Tamara
I am twelve years old.
I live with my mum, dad
and younger brother.

We have been here
five years now.
A beautiful town
lovely school and teachers.
I am even learning Irish.

After school I go home
to our one room.
Try to do my homework.
Mum and Dad
so stressed again.

The system, the system
they bemoan
as they attempt again
to fill in the forms.

Mum crying
she can't cook for her family.
Dad feeling heartbroken
as he cannot work to provide
for his family.

We came here in good faith.
Who is accountable?
Everyone and no one.
Five long years
waiting for asylum.

The reality of our lives now
makes me so sad.
but we will rally
and we will overcome.
Then, when we have our new home
my friends will visit
mum will cook treats
dad will work
and be happy again.

Behind Closed Doors

The sensation
of his fist.
Again.

Cowering in
the kitchen.
Again.

Blood spattered
white t-shirt.
Again.

Perfect husband
perfect father
pillar of the community.

Ten years,
ten long years
morph into
this moment.

But ...
this is my moment.
I have my map
for succour
refuge and for my life.

Have I got
the strength?
Have I?
Have I?
To walk out
the door

Fuschia is the first collection of poems published by Anna O'Doherty, with illustrations by Tomás Galvin. Some of her poems are based on childhood memories in West Cork and beautiful landscapes in Kerry. Other poems remember family members and friends. Her poems also ask the reader to think about some women living difficult lives. She is originally from Timoleague, Co. Cork and has lived in Tralee, Co. Kerry for twenty years with her family. Anna studied Social Science at University College Cork, graduating in 1984, and completed a Masters in Social Science (Youth and Community Work) in 1996. An eclectic career has seen her work as a social worker, TEFL teacher, community worker and lecturer at the Institute of Technology Tralee, before discovering the joy of writing poetry. Her email address for inquiries regarding her book is – annaodoherty2017@gmail.com